

**STEPS**

**GROUP**  
**AUSTRALIA**

# ANNUAL REVIEW

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# OUR PURPOSE

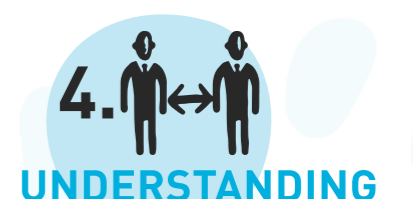
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STEPS Group Australia is a for purpose organisation passionate about making a difference in the world by providing individuals and communities with the opportunity to shine.

## OUR COMMITMENT

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE BY  
PROVIDING OPPORTUNITY**

## OUR VALUES



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# MD'S MESSAGE



This year has been extraordinary in many ways for many of us, both within the team of STEPS and for our networks of supporters, sponsors and stakeholders.

There are many milestones I could offer as proof that we remain on track and on purpose for achieving the significant objectives that we set for ourselves. We have also, unplanned and at times unexpectedly, been rewarded with grants; business, industry and professional awards; peer recognition; political support at every level; and kind words from our clients, customers, students, staff and friends.

Of all the many great and humbling moments I've experienced this year, there were two days I shared with our whole team that were incredibly fulfilling and moving.

The first took place in May on the very first day that students arrived at STEPS Pathways College to begin their individual journey towards shaping their own independent lives. I will never forget their faces and the faces of their families as they shared in the excitement and full realisation that their future was truly in their own hands. As a parent of a young man with a disability, I empathised with their every emotion. It has been a long road filled with momentous decisions and challenges to see the College open, and the sheer generosity of every person and company who has supported its realisation often takes my breath away. To design, build, furnish and open a College such as this without any form of government funding to date has been monumentally difficult and yet overwhelmingly gratifying.

The other key moment this year was to take the stage with our Charity manager at the Sunshine Coast Business Awards to accept the award

for the region's leading Social Enterprise – an unprecedented honour for us to achieve, as judged by our peers and not for profit business leaders, in the very first year of the Charity's full operation. Earlier this year the Charity's now annual Grand Winter Ball event also set a startling new record for fundraising, thanks to the commitment of many benefactors, big and small. Standing before a room of more than 600 business leaders applauding our Charity's performance was very special.

I know very well that every success is due to shared effort and our pulling together in the same direction and so I want to genuinely thank and acknowledge all of the clients, families, staff, government, business and community supporters for their year-round support.

Every person involved in STEPS in any way shares in the philosophy of equipping individuals with the skills they need to set their own goals, and create their own path to success – whatever their challenges, origin or dream.

We will no doubt continue learning, sharing and growing, and I look forward to achieving many more momentous goals with you.

**Carmel Crouch, Managing Director**

## OUR SERVICE AREAS

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# OUR FOOTPRINT



## NORTHERN TERRITORY

### ALICE SPRINGS

- Disability Employment Services
- Employability Skills Training
- Skills for Education and Employment

### BARKLY REGION

- Northern Territory Aged Care Project

### CASUARINA

- Adult Migrant English Program
- Employability Skills Training
- Skills for Education and Employment

### CENTRAL DESERT REGION

- Northern Territory Aged Care Project

### DARWIN

- National Panel of Assessors

### GALIWINKU

- Skills for Education and Employment

### GUNBALANYA

- Skills for Education and Employment

### MILINGIMBI

- Skills for Education and Employment

### KATHERINE

- Skills for Education and Employment

### PALMERSTON

- Adult Migrant English Program

- Employability Skills Training

- Skills for Education and Employment



## QUEENSLAND

### ATHERTON

- Skills for Education and Employment

### AYR

- Disability Employment Services incl. Mental Health Specific Disability

### BRISBANE

- National Panel of Assessors

### BUNDBERG

- Care for Carers Program
- Disability Employment Services incl. Mental Health Specific Disability
- Dove Recruitment
- Employability Skills Training
- NDIS Services
- STEPS Staffing Solutions
- Vocational Educations and Training (VET) *Aged Care, Disability and Mental Health*

### CAIRNS

- Disability Employment Services
- Employability Skills Training
- National Panel of Assessors
- Skills for Education and Employment
- Vocational Educations and Training (VET) *Aged Care, Disability and Mental Health*

### CALOUNDRA

- Disability Employment Services
- Employability Skills Training
- National Disability Coordination Officer Program (region 20)
- National Panel of Assessors
- STEPS Charity
- STEPS Head Office
- STEPS Nursery
- STEPS Pathways College
- Vocational Educations and Training (VET) *Aged Care, Disability and Mental Health*

### COTTON TREE

- Dove Recruitment
- STEPS Staffing Solutions

### GYMPIE

- Care for Carers Program
- Disability Employment Services incl. Mental Health Specific Disability
- Employability Skills Training
- NDIS Services
- Partners in Recovery

### MACKAY

- National Panel of Assessors

### MAROOCHYDORE

- Disability Employment Services
- Employability Skills Training
- National Panel of Assessors
- STEPS Autism Treehouse
- STEPS Community Services

### MALENY

- Disability Employment Services

### MILES

- National Panel of Assessors

### MOSSMAN

- Skills for Education and Employment

### MURGOON

- Disability Employment Services incl. Mental Health Specific Disability

### NAMBOUR

- Disability Employment Services incl. Mental Health Specific Disability
- National Panel of Assessors
- Vocational Educations and Training (VET) *Aged Care, Disability and Mental Health*

### NOOSA

- Disability Employment Services
- Employability Skills Training
- Vocational Educations and Training (VET) *Aged Care, Disability and Mental Health*

### TOWNSVILLE

- Disability Employment Services incl. Mental Health Specific Disability
- National Disability Coordination Officer Program (region 22)
- National Panel of Assessors
- Vocational Educations and Training (VET) *Aged Care, Disability and Mental Health*

### WIDE BAY REGION

- Care for Carers Program (*Gin Gin, Childers, Hervey Bay, Woodgate, Maryborough, Kingaroy*)



## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

### DERBY

- Skills for Education and Employment

### PERTH

- National Panel of Assessors



## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

### ADELAIDE

- National Panel of Assessors



## VICTORIA

### BEAUFORT

- National Panel of Assessors

### GEELONG

- National Panel of Assessors

### GIPPSLAND

- National Panel of Assessors

### MELBOURNE

- National Panel of Assessors

### MILDURA

- National Panel of Assessors

### WANGARATTA

- National Panel of Assessors



## TASMANIA

### DEVONPORT

- Employability Skills Straining
- National Panel of Assessors

### HOBART

- Disability Employment Services
- Employability Skills Training
- Indigenous Advancement Strategy
- Training and Employment Centres (VTEC)
- Vocational Educations and Training (VET) *Aged Care, Disability and Mental Health*



## NEW SOUTH WALES

### LONG BEACH

- National Panel of Assessors

### MUDGEE

- National Panel of Assessors

### SYDNEY

- National Panel of Assessors

### WAGGA WAGGA

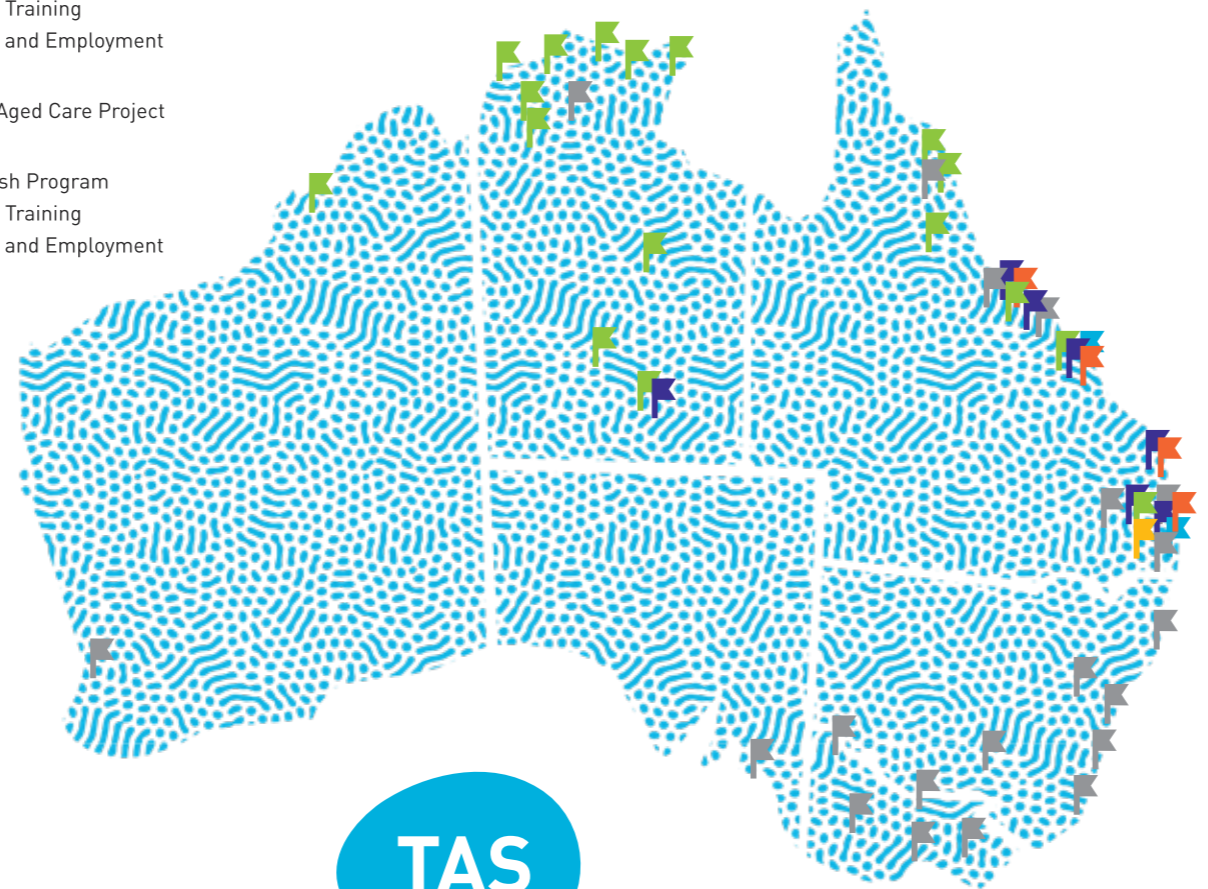
- National Panel of Assessors

### WOLLONGONG

- National Panel of Assessors

### YAMBA

- National Panel of Assessors



# EMPLOYMENT SOLUTIONS



**PHOEBE PAYNE**  
Executive Manager –  
Employment Solutions

STEPS have been helping people with a disability for 30 years. We've supported thousands of people into employment, building the confidence of our customers, and breaking down barriers standing in their way to achieving their dream job. Though we have always achieved successful outcomes for our customers, in 2017 we stood back to take a good look at our business, and review whether our service delivery was best suited to the current market.

This review led to a few significant changes for us, including; a major restructure aimed at improving the overall experience for our customers at each touch point of their journey, the implementation of a values-based customer service model, and the introduction of Individual Placement and Support (IPS) services for customers with specific support needs.

It was also important for us to align the changes to our business with the expectations of the new Disability Employment Services (DES) contract. With the government's focus on improving choice and control for participants, and increasing contestability amongst service providers, it was important for us to strategise a way of becoming the provider of choice for current and future customers, and local employers.

By moving to a values-based customer service model we became more aware of each individual's personal journey and were able

to better understand and support their needs and their career aspirations. In addition to this, implementing an IPS program across our business allowed us to break down barriers to employment and support our customers with serious mental illness.

All our Employment Solutions programs focus on a holistic approach by providing our customers with important linkages to other support services in the community to assist with overall wellness, and building self-esteem and skills for job readiness – just to name a few. Another important aspect of our business is ensuring we are proactively working with employers to provide them with a better understanding and awareness of working with people with a disability, injury or mental illness, including how to support these employees on the job, in their workplace.

As always, we campaign tirelessly to change the perceptions of employers in regards to hiring a person with a disability, illness or injury. Recognising their rights, together with a general awareness of the need to improve their quality of life in the broader community, has somewhat flowed into attitudes in the workplace. There is still much work to be done to increase the employment rate of people with a disability, and for employers to recognise that while some people may not be able to do some things, they have refined skills in other areas – and the focus needs to change to what they can do.

Internal structural changes were made to improve communications with our customers and employers. The new values-based customer service model fed into our own performance modelling, aligning our operational systems, processes, roles, responsibilities, and more importantly culture to these changes has resulted in us being able to deliver a more flexible, engaging and meaningful service.

The significant changes made to our business throughout 2017 resulted in STEPS consistently achieving outcomes for our customers over and above the national average for the DES industry. As a result, this helped us to achieve a successful outcome with our Grant Application for the new Disability Employment Services from July 2018 and a place on the panel of DES providers.

Our STEPS Group Australia vision to enhance our customer's experience further, has seen us integrate a range of STEPS services within each of the locations where we have a footprint. This includes STEPS' highly respected Education & Training, Community Services and our STEPS Staffing Solutions businesses.

Our Community Services team provide our customers with lifestyle and recreational activities and support, along with critical disability and carer assistance. We also welcome both STEPS Staffing Solutions and

Dove Personnel into the STEPS family, offering a targeted recruitment service for the disability and aged care industries, which in turn provides STEPS Employment Solutions customers with temporary to long term work opportunities.

Another highlight of 2017 was the extension of funding from July 2018 for STEPS National Panel of Assessment services, including Ongoing Support and Supported Wage System Assessments. These Assessments are vital and are used to determine the appropriate level of ongoing support that a participant, in a program with a DES provider, needs to maintain their employment. The purpose for a Supported Wages Assessment is to determine the productivity of a person with disability working in the open labour market.

While I personally was not with the organisation throughout most of this year of significant change, I am responsible now for commandeering STEPS Employment Solutions into the future, ensuring we stay true to our values and our commitment to make a difference by providing opportunity. Throughout 2018 we promise to continue to work progressively to meet our customers' needs and to provide them with an engaging experience that makes STEPS a for purpose organisation, and a provider of choice in our local communities.



### NATIONAL PANEL OF ASSESSORS

STEPS National Panel of Assessors (NPA) provide a range of Assessment Services to assist with the needs of people with a disability in the workplace. Services include Ongoing Support Wage Assessments, Supported Wage System Assessments and Workplace Modifications Scheme (WMS) Assessments, which continues to be a vital service to the community. In April we received funding to extend STEPS NPA services into 2018.

### DISABILITY MANAGEMENT SERVICE

STEPS Disability Management Service provides job seekers with a disability, injury or health condition with assistance to find a job, and occasional support in the workplace to keep a job.

### EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT SERVICES

We help job seekers with permanent disability to find a job. We also offer regular, ongoing support in the workplace to our customers who need extra support.

### INDIVIDUAL PLACEMENT AND SUPPORT

We break down barriers to employment for our customers with serious mental illness. STEPS Individual Placement and Support services provides linkages to other support services in the community to promote overall wellness, improve confidence and skills for employment, and work with employers to provide a better understanding of mental illness, including how to support mental illness in the workplace.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Introduced Individual Placement and Support services to better support people with mental illness return to the workforce
- Integrated STEPS Employment Solutions sites with other STEPS services, creating a broader range of opportunities for our customers
- Successful tender results gave us the opportunity to be the provider of choice for disability employment services

# EDUCATION & TRAINING



**JOEL STEVENS**

Executive Manager – Education & Training

STEPS Education & Training continues to expand, shift and grow geographically, and in doing so we have greatly diversified our customer base. This has been in no small part due to our successful tendering of the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) for the Darwin region. The addition of AMEP to our service offering has resulted in STEPS establishing two new major sites in Darwin, and welcoming refugees and humanitarian migrants from more than 40 countries into our classrooms to learn core skills for settlement in Australia.

We also secured the nationwide delivery of the federally funded Employability Skills Training (EST) for young people aged between 15 and 24 years of age, we expanded our Individual Support training programs into Cairns, Townsville and Bundaberg, and rolled out a revised Skills for Education and Employment program.

With moves occurring in four different states, we took the opportunity to update our classrooms with cutting edge technology and design, creating the optimum environment for adult learning. Taking a responsive design approach, our newest classrooms promote the interaction between the social and physical aspects of learning, as well as between the student and the learning environment.

The STEPS team pulled together in a colossal effort to get our new classrooms and programs up and running in the face of impossibly tight timeframes. This fast expansion required us to place a major focus on recruitment, and a creative recruitment strategy proved successful in securing the high level of staff required to deliver our new suite of services, particularly in our notoriously difficult recruitment regions in remote Northern Territory.

Providing services in remote Northern Territory is of course hugely rewarding, and we consider ourselves lucky to be able to make a positive impact in this remarkable part of Australia. The people are amazing and we gain such close connections to our students and the community as a whole. Working remotely does come with its difficulties however; affordability, distance, technology, resource limitations and recruitment pose real challenges to effective service delivery. To overcome these barriers we rely on strong, mutually beneficial partnerships that allow us to provide a more holistic service to the community, as well as strengthen the quality and breadth of our primary service offering. In 2017 we embarked on several successful local collaborations that exemplify this multi-organisational approach to community development.

Our recent partnership with the Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation (ALPA) has allowed us to deliver important language, literacy and numeracy training (through the Skills for Education and Employment program) in the small island community of Galiwinku. In another small township outside of Katherine, we are working in collaboration with the Kelano Community Associate to provide language, literacy and numeracy training for Aboriginal people undergoing rehabilitation from alcohol and other drug use at the Venndale Rehabilitation and Withdrawal Centre. The addition of language, literacy and numeracy skills as part of their recovery process gives patients improved opportunities for work post recovery, as well as improved self esteem as they tackle each learning goal.

## SKILLS FOR EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

The Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) program provides language, literacy and numeracy training to eligible job seekers, to help them on their journey towards further training or the workforce.

## ADULT MIGRANT ENGLISH PROGRAM

The Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) provides English language tuition to eligible migrants and humanitarian entrants to assist them in learning English and settlement skills, to help them become active and contributing members of their communities.

## EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS PROGRAM

Employability Skills Training (EST) helps young people achieve their goals and become job ready through intensive pre-employment training.

## CERTIFICATE III IN INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

The Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing, Home and Community) provides graduates with the skills and knowledge needed to gain employment in a range of care and support roles. We offer this course in Queensland under two different funding options, the Certificate 3 Guarantee and Skilling Queenslanders for Work; and in the Northern Territory with support from the Northern Territory Government and the Department of Health.

## CERTIFICATE II IN COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Certificate II in Community Services provides training for people who are looking for skills for working in home and community care, personal care, community services administration and other care and assistive roles. Training is delivered with the support of the Northern Territory Government and the Department of Health.

## GET SET FOR WORK

Get Set for Work provides young people aged 15-19 years with nationally recognised training, combined with integrated learning support measures and foundation skills. The aim is to assist students to successfully transition to employment or further education.

## READY FOR WORK

STEPS Ready for Work program offers assistance to young people to help them transition into the workforce through learning practical skills needed to successfully find work.

## REGISTERED TRAINING ORGANISATION

STEPS is proud to be a registered training organisation, offering a range of certified training across Australia. Our specialisation in the disability and care sectors, partnered with our strong relationships with local employers, mean that we can offer our students training that gives them the best outcomes in their community.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- 100% employment rate for young people exiting STEPS Certificate III in Individual Support courses
- Helped refugees and humanitarian migrants from more than 40 nationalities gain important skills for future training and employment
- Increased language, literacy and numeracy skills of Indigenous students in remote and regional communities in the Northern Territory, Western Australia, and Tasmania

## SOCIAL & COMMUNITY



**KERRY STAINES**  
Executive Manager –  
Community Services

Well, what a year! I would say 2017 was a year in which we truly embodied our organisation's commitment to make a difference by providing opportunity. We didn't do this passively, we took the bull by the horns! We provided our customers and the community with opportunities through information and knowledge, through support and wellness, and by helping our customers achieve a sense of security and confidence about their abilities and their future.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme dominated the community services landscape, and with it a sense of uncertainty shared by both the industry and the people whose lives will be affected by the revolutionary new scheme. STEPS embarked on a state-wide campaign to overcome this uncertainty and empower people with a disability, their families and their carers, helping them to navigate through the information within this new environment. We worked and are working closely with families, showing them the tools and supports available to help them confidently raise and achieve a life of greater independence for their child with a disability, within the foundations of the NDIS.

This year we celebrated a landmark achievement in the history of STEPS, and a first for people with a disability in Australia with the opening of STEPS Pathways College. In May we welcomed our very first students to the College where they began their journey to learn the practical and life skills needed for successful independent living. Students have been thoroughly enjoying their time living at the College, developing lovely friendships,

practicing their cooking, budgeting, cleaning and shopping skills, as well as social interactions critical to independence in the community.

One of the reasons STEPS Pathways College is so special, apart from being the first educational complex of its kind in Australia, is because it was built by our community. The cost of building and resourcing STEPS Pathways College has 100 per cent come from money, supplies and services generously donated to us by the Sunshine Coast community. Driven by STEPS Charity, STEPS Pathways College is truly an achievement the whole community can be proud of. We look forward to watching the first of our students graduate from the College ready to achieve their life goals.

Another major achievement for STEPS was the introduction of STEPS Autism Treehouse, connecting Sunshine Coast families, children and young people living with autism, to support and resources, life skills programs, education and social events. Autism Treehouse had been successfully providing services in the community for several years before joining with STEPS to expand their footprint and service offering. We look forward to continuing the good work Autism Treehouse is known for, and using STEPS' broad ranging experience and networks to empower many more young people with autism and their families.

STEPS had the opportunity to host a series of events throughout National Disability Week, including collaborative breakfast forums in Townsville and Bundaberg. This gave a

broad range of service providers across several industries a chance to play a role in supporting individuals with a disability and their families through collecting data to inform and improve accessibility for people with a disability. The data covered the areas of training and employment, community engagement, accommodation and lifestyle, health and wellbeing, and in doing so opened up a world of opportunities for people in our communities. All information collected provided solutions to challenges within their specific region. This information was then collated and developed into a professional booklet that was distributed to decision makers and influencers within their region.

In 2017 STEPS Community Services opened its door to fee for service customers, giving all people with a disability in our community the opportunity to join in our popular social and recreational groups that focus on fun, friendship and wellbeing. Activities range from swimming, music, art groups, walking and cooking, all set in a relaxed, social environment. And our annual Community Services camp was so popular we've made it a bi-annual event! While these activities sound like a lot of fun (and they are!), this approach to disability support services provides positive outcomes by improving self-esteem and confidence, encouraging healthy lifestyle choices for healthier physical and mental wellbeing, and building social skills that help improve the quality of relationships of our customers.

Of course, a huge part of what STEPS Social and Community do is centred around supporting people with mental illness, including those with severe and persistent mental illness, on their journey to recovery. We continued this work throughout 2017 assisting people through STEPS Pet Companions program, the Healthy Habits program, and through STEPS Partners in Recovery.

The Pet Companions program allowed people in the community experiencing mental health issues to seek in-hospital care, with peace of mind knowing our team of volunteers were there to care for their beloved pets.

The Healthy Habits program assisted men and women with mental illness to improve their health through setting realistic health and lifestyle goals, learning how to manage their stress, building self-esteem, and connecting with others on a shared journey towards wellness.

Through STEPS Partners in Recovery program we provided critical linkages for people with severe and persistent mental illness to a holistic range of services to support their recovery, including housing, therapy and counselling, and drug and alcohol support. And STEPS' long term program, STEPS Commercial Cleaning, strengthened our partnerships with Queensland Mental Health and a host of local businesses, to provide individuals with a lived experience of mental health the opportunity to become job-ready over a six-month period before moving on to open market prospects.

This year we have worked strategically to significantly grow and expand our Social and Community Services offering to help people in critical need of assistance, including those who are most vulnerable due to isolation, limited support networks and are facing multiple barriers to wellness. By assisting a person to be healthy, well and secure, we can open them up to opportunities that truly make a difference in their lives.



WE EMPOWER PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY, THEIR FAMILIES AND THEIR CARERS, HELPING THEM THROUGH INFORMATION, KNOWLEDGE, SUPPORT AND WELLNESS, TO ACHIEVE THEIR PERSONAL GOALS.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- STEPS Pathways College was opened to students, providing for the first time a place for young people with a disability to learn how to achieve lifelong independence
- STEPS Autism Treehouse was established to connect and inform families and young people with autism
- Hosted state-wide events to raise awareness of issues relating to disability and inclusion throughout Disability Action Week
- We opened our social and recreational groups up as fee for service, allowing people with a disability outside of our own client base to benefit from gaining new skills, new friends, and a new sense of well being
- Our award winning Care for Carers program received extended funding to continue to support carers in the Wide Bay region

### STEPS CARE FOR CARERS

STEPS Care for Carers provides invaluable support and resources to unpaid carers in the Wide Bay, Burnett and Gympie regions. We coordinate informative and social meetings, peer support, counselling and mentoring. The STEPS Care for Carers program is supported by funding from the Australian Government under the Commonwealth HACC program and the Queensland Government.

### PARTNERS IN RECOVERY

Partners in Recovery connects people with a severe and persistent mental illness, and their carers and families, with a support coordinator who helps them navigate the mental health sector.

### STEPS PATHWAYS COLLEGE

An Australian first, STEPS Pathways College provides young people with a disability the opportunity to live brighter, more independent lives. Our holistic approach to learning gives students the opportunity to graduate with the right skills, a new sense of responsibility for their life, and the motivation to take ownership of their future.

### STEPS COMMUNITY SERVICES

STEPS Community Services provides flexible, individualised support to improve the quality of life of people with a disability. Our services are designed to promote improved wellbeing and independence in life. We also offer a broad range of classes ranging from bushwalking and swimming to cooking and craft.

### STEPS COMMERCIAL CLEANING

STEPS Commercial Cleaning provides cleaning services to Sunshine Coast businesses, as well as a mobile car detailing service. The service also offers people an opportunity to gain work experience and employability skills in a supportive, positive environment.

### STEPS AUTISM TREEHOUSE

STEPS Autism Treehouse provides support to a community of Sunshine Coast families, children and young people living with autism. We offer access to resources, life skills programs, education and social events.





# PATHWAYS COLLEGE

# SKILLS FOR LIVING SKILLS FOR LIFE

In May 2017 STEPS Pathways College officially opened its doors to the first group of students with a disability who will have the opportunity to graduate with the skills to live independently. A first of its kind in Australia, the Caloundra-based College has been extremely popular with students enrolling from as far as west as Warwick, and as far north as Maryborough.

STEPS Pathways College is a purpose built 10 bedroom facility that is specifically designed for people living with disability. The program involves the students living on campus and engaging in an intensive 12-18 month educational curriculum that focuses on true independent living skills and community integration. In addition to acquiring a broad range of practical life skills, our holistic approach to learning gives students a greater understanding of themselves, new sense of responsibility for their life, and the motivation to take ownership of their future.

STEPS Pathways College was built entirely through generous donations from the community and fundraising activities through STEPS Charity. In particular the College was made possible by the support of local benefactor Ben Murphy of BA Murphy Constructions, and the Murphy family, who rallied the local construction industry to donate their services to build STEPS Pathways College. In addition STEPS' largest annual charity event, the STEPS Grand Winter Ball, raised funds that allowed us to develop the program and resources in our first year of operation.

We look forward to watching our first group of students graduate, a monumental achievement and a proud event for the team at STEPS, the students and their families. Built entirely by the community for the community, STEPS Pathway College is an achievement we can all be proud of.





## STEPS NURSERY

STEPS Nursery continues to flourish, thanks to the support of our volunteers, customers and the greater community. We were lucky to receive a grant from the Sunshine Coast Council as a part of the Community Grants Program. This was used to fund our expansion, including irrigation systems, covering our hardening off area with hail mesh and creating a brand new space for indoor plants. With the extra space, we can now carry a bigger range and offer our customers a greater selection of plants. It's been wonderful to see the surprise on customer's faces when they visit the nursery, especially if they haven't visited in a while!

One of the most exciting events on our calendar was hosting the first Sunshine Coast Plant Swap with local gardening group All Things Garden. So much more than a day of gardeners swapping plants, the event also helped raise community awareness for the nursery and the projects we support. The plant swap events keep growing in popularity and we're sure next year will be no different.

STEPS Nursery is an incredible and unique place to be a part of and our staff enjoy sharing their love of gardening with customers and volunteers alike. A diverse group of people come through the gates to volunteer at the nursery and the team has a huge amount of fun while working.

"FOR MORE THAN 16 YEARS WE HAVE PROVIDED A PLACE FOR STUDENTS, VOLUNTEERS, AND PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY TO BUILD THEIR WORK EXPERIENCE, LEARN NEW SKILLS, SOCIALISE, AND DEVELOP THEIR ABILITY TO WORK AS PART OF A TEAM."

LISA BUCKLEY  
Nursery Manager

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Received funding that allowed us to expand the nursery to almost double its size
- Providing a place for people with a disability to gain skills and confidence as part of their journey to employment
- Seeing our funds raised go back into supporting projects that make a difference in our community

## DOVE RECRUITMENT

Dove Recruitment is an expert recruitment solutions provider, specialising in commercial and executive placements.

## STAFFING SOLUTIONS

STEPS Staffing Solutions provide specialist recruitment solutions for the community services, aged, home and corporate health sectors.



**DEBBIE RAWLINGS**  
Manager –  
Dove Recruitment &  
STEPS Staffing Solutions

In 2017, Dove Personnel came under the wing of STEPS Group Australia, relaunching as Dove Recruitment specialising in commercial and executive job placements and on-hire services. Shortly following this we launched a specialised recruitment solutions business specifically to meet the needs of the NDIS, providing recruitment services for the community services, aged, home and corporate health care sectors.

Soon after launching on the Sunshine Coast we opened our doors in Bundaberg to service the Wide Bay region. It has been truly refreshing and inspiring to lead and grow a recruitment service with a not for profit, for purpose vision.

With our core commitment to make a difference by providing opportunity, we are able to bring local employers on a journey with us to make a positive impact in the community.

# STEPS CHARITY



**ANGELA HARRISON**  
Charity Manager

STEPS Charity is working to create a brighter future for people with a disability. We promote equality and provide opportunities for independence and improved quality of life. Through STEPS Pathways College, we're providing young people with a disability the opportunity to learn skills for a lifetime of independence.

If you want to find out what can be achieved through people power - work for a charity! I have the most amazing, most grounding job because I am constantly humbled by the enormous generosity of others, and am profoundly touched by the good that is achieved as a result. Through the generosity of our community, we've built not only a charity, but a groundbreaking education complex for young people with a disability.

STEPS Charity's key focus is to raise funds to support the development of STEPS Pathways College. Being such a young charity, we've had to build our relationships and brand in order to achieve the fundraising outcome needed to reach our primary goal. With a tiny paid employee base, we worked to grow our volunteer base from scratch to a loyal army of passionate volunteers. We established a charity committee of engaged local business people and professionals to help guide the charity towards its fundraising goals, and provide expert advice on key growth strategies for the Charity.

We're proud to have become a household name locally, achieved through a mixture of sharing information with the community about who we are and what we do, by partnering with local individuals and organisations who share

our dream, through community engagement activities and a series of fundraising events. This has been no small feat given the limited resources available to us, in a market filled with charities working to support numerous worthy causes. But STEPS Charity and our work to improve the quality of life for people with a disability really struck a chord in our community, who showed their support through donations of money, products, services and time.

For our flagship event, the STEPS Grand Winter Ball, the business community came on board to cover the cost of the night as well as donate raffle and auction prizes for the night's fundraising activities raising a whopping \$171,000 for students at STEPS Pathways College. Other ways we raised funds were through student sponsorships, corporate partnerships, and our newly established Workplace Giving Program which we hope to extend to other communities in the future.

Our volunteers, who fill roles varying from administration, to event coordination and fundraising, worked tirelessly speaking with people in the community to share our cause and asking for support to help us achieve our goal.

In 2017, with thanks to our volunteers, our sponsors, and those in the community who partnered with STEPS Charity, we opened STEPS Pathways College and welcomed our first group of young people with a disability to come and live and learn with us for a brighter future. I look forward to working with the community to help many more young people with a disability achieve life long independence.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- STEPS Grand Winter Ball raised \$171,000 for young people with a disability at STEPS Pathways College
- Building an army of wonderful, loyal STEPS Charity volunteers
- STEPS Pathways College opens its doors to the first group of students



## WAYS TO HELP

### VOLUNTEER

Join the STEPS team as a valued volunteer! Volunteering is a great way to give back to the community, as well as building your own skills for future employment. We're looking for volunteers to help out in all areas of our organisation - all over Australia. So if you have a passion, come and put it into practice at STEPS! Call us on 07 5458 3000 for information about volunteering at STEPS.

### GIVE

You can support the work we do by making a donation to STEPS Charity. Your donation to STEPS Charity goes towards creating a brighter future for young people with a disability in our community. You can make a one off donation, set up regular giving, or join a Workplace Giving Program.

Give today at [www.stepscharity.com.au](http://www.stepscharity.com.au)

# OUR PARTNERS

## CHARITY COMMITTEE

John Hutchinson  
Brett Mills  
Rebecca Grisman  
Angela Miles  
Stuart Coward  
Carmel Crouch  
Ben Murphy  
Amanda Murphy

## LIVING LEGENDS:

Ken Mills Toyota  
BA Murphy Constructions  
Think Money  
Honorary: Murphy Homes

## SPECIAL THANKS TO

Linda Feltman of McGrath Estate Agents Caloundra  
Lake Kawana Currimundi Lions Club  
Caloundra Pacific Rotary Club  
Kawana Chamber of Commerce  
Stroud Homes  
The Hon. Jarrod Bleijie MP  
Alyce Burnett  
Mindset For Success  
SPS Audit  
Business Beats  
Tracey Johnston  
Evans Long  
Mooloolaba Yacht Club  
Workplace Central  
Helen Ferguson  
Noltis Prime - T00M00  
Forturity Property Partners  
Ultim8fitness  
The Indy Foundation  
The Sunny Coast Club  
Rumba Resort  
Downunder Beachfest  
Caloundra RSL Sub-Branch  
Caloundra Connect

## IN KIND DONATIONS:

Jensen Electrical Group  
ARBEE Roofing  
Rollsec  
National Tiles  
Plaster Warehouse  
Neil Mansell Landscape Supplies  
The Mattress Company  
Stacks Building Supplies  
Supaview  
Hanceys Turf  
Accurate Pest Management  
BARE Coffee Company  
Freedom Furniture  
Paessler AG  
Best Western Plus Lake Kawana  
Novotel Twin Waters  
DYFA Plumbing  
Oceanview Cabinets  
The Australian Reinforcing Company  
Ironbark Timber  
Metroll Queensland  
Rod Ross Painting  
Sunshine Mitre 10

## GRAND WINTER BALL PARTNERS

**Presenting Partner:**  
BA Murphy Constructions

**Diamond Partners:**  
Ken Mills Toyota  
Think Money  
Elypsys Fibre Networks

**Ruby Partners:**  
Choice Insurance Solutions  
InvestWise Financial Planning  
GSG Contracting

**Pearl Partners:**  
Pacific Office Solutions  
HRM Contracting and Consulting  
Bentleys Thinking Ahead  
Spire Law

## Media Partners:

AVID Property Group  
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Sea 91.9  
7 News Sunshine Coast  
My Weekly Preview  
Sunshine Coast Daily  
Ken Mills Toyota  
91.1 Hot  
Zinc 96.1  
Nine  
Profile Magazine

## Raffle Partners:

Bank of Queensland Maroochydore  
HelloWorld Travel Caloundra

## Event Partners:

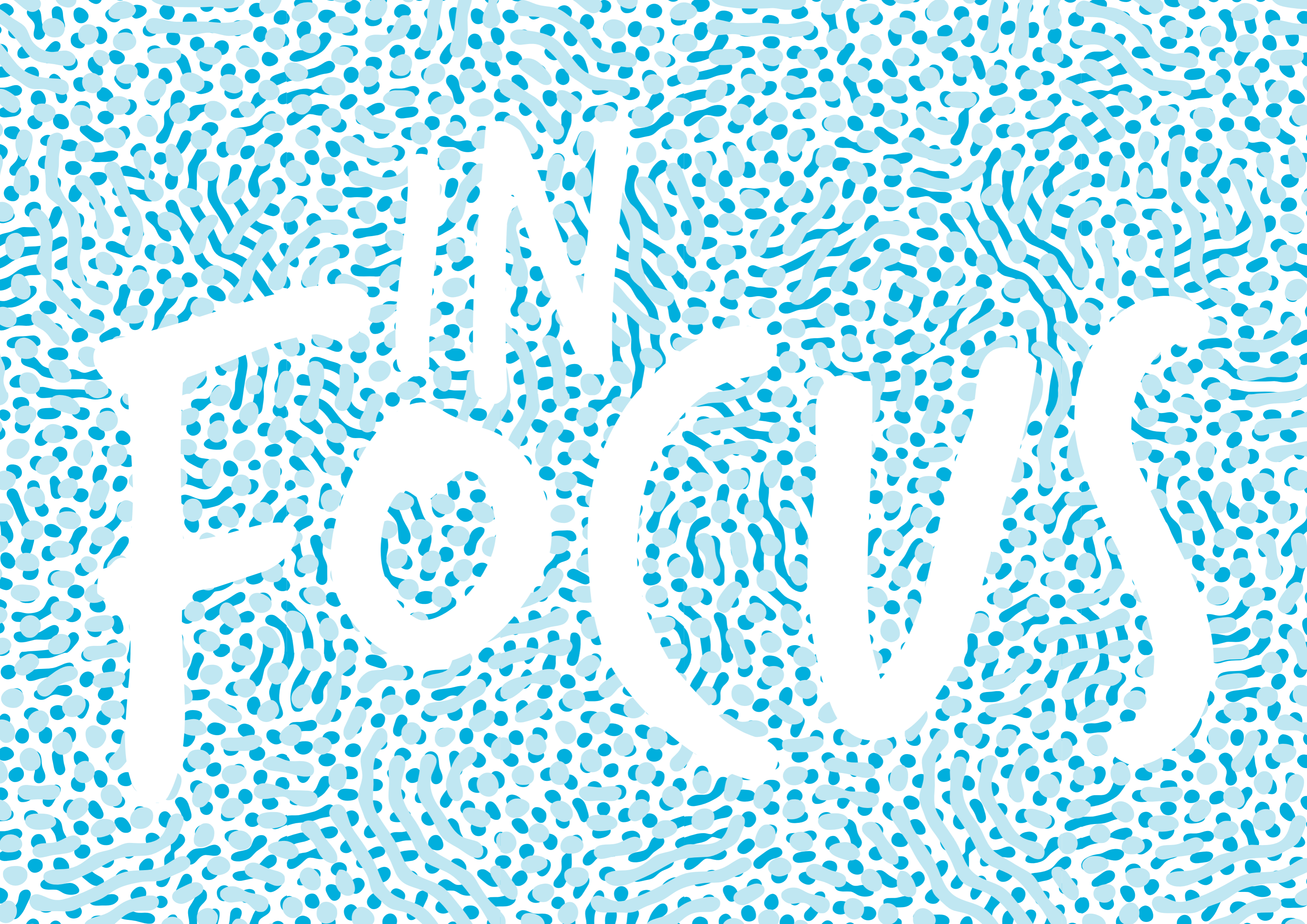
The Events Centre Caloundra  
Asahi Premium Beverages  
Secret Service  
Rockliff the Seafood Family  
Jason Hay Photography  
Miss Monogram  
Tides Waterfront Dining  
Diageo  
Sanpellegrino Pacific  
Campaign Group  
Express Print and Mail  
Suits Direct  
Acqua Panna  
Sunshine Coast Hotels  
Monaco  
Top Cut  
Baz Rufus Photography  
Rhys Cosgrave Videography  
Art Morais Photography  
Demi International

## GRAND WINTER BALL AUXILIARY:

Amanda Murphy  
Donna Niazov  
Kimberley Richards  
Tanya King  
Sharon Baird  
Natalie Crombie  
Rebecca Kay  
Chloe Kopilovic  
Beth Berghan  
Jayde McLeod  
Sammy Hemsley  
Angela Miles  
Rochelle Coombs

A very special thank you to all of our STEPS Charity Administration and Event Volunteers.








## WE CONNECTED

- STEPS Nursery held their first Sunshine Coast Plant Swap events with local gardening group All Things Garden, fundraising to complete its expansion
- STEPS hosted community events across Queensland for Disability Action Week, including Disability Community Breakfast Forums and Wheelchair Basketball events



## WE PARTNERED

- STEPS Education & Training partnered with The Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation to deliver Skills for Education and Employment in Galiwinku
- STEPS Education & Training partnered with Mens Shed in Tangentyere to deliver Language Literacy and Numeracy training
- Our SEE program in Katherine partnered with Venndale drug and rehabilitation centre to provide clients with skills that will benefit them as they integrate back into the community
- STEPS partnered with the Mossman Gorge Centre in Far North Queensland to provide wrap around Language Literacy and Numeracy support to Indigenous trainees completing their Certificate II in Kitchen Operations



## WE CELEBRATED

- STEPS Pathways College held their Orientation Day for students, families and staff to meet and tour the campus
- STEPS trainer Marianne Slade was shortlisted as a finalist for the Australian Training Awards' Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) Excellence Award
- STEPS Charity won the Social Enterprise category in the 2017 Sunshine Coast Business Awards
- Managing director Carmel Crouch was a finalist for the Queensland Senior Australian of the Year Awards
- STEPS Pathways College won the Education Provider of the Year at the Inaugural Fisher Community Awards
- STEPS staff were selected to present at the NDS – Disability at Work Conference in Sydney about STEPS Pathways College



## WE LAUNCHED

- STEPS acquired recruitment business Dove Personnel, coinciding with the rebrand to Dove Recruitment and the launch of STEPS Staffing Solutions
- Our Employability Skills Training (EST) program launched the Employability Skills Panel
- Local charity The Autism Treehouse joined STEPS to become STEPS Autism Treehouse
- STEPS Pathways College opened its classroom doors and students moved into the accommodation units
- Launched a project to develop a Social Impact Evaluation Tool



## WE PROVIDED

- Introduced Individual Placement and Support (IPS), an evidence-based approach to assist people with serious mental illness into work
- We began rolling out NDIS information sessions to carers in the Bundaberg and Wide Bay regions



## WE CARED

- STEPS Community Services held their annual camp for people with a disability at Borumba Deer Park



## WE CREATED

- STEPS Employment Solutions launched a project to implement a values-based customer service model



## WE PLANNED

- STEPS Group Australia moved to expand sites to provide multiple services in our locations Australia-wide



## WE FUNDRAISED

- STEPS Charity hosted the annual STEPS Grand Winter Ball, our major fundraising event of the year, raising over \$170,000 for STEPS Pathways College
- STEPS Charity launched the Workplace Giving Program, allowing employees to give a regular donation through their pay
- STEPS Autism Treehouse hosted the inaugural Vantage Homes Trek for Autism, seeing 250 people walk 25km and raise approximately \$61,000



## WE EXPANDED

- STEPS Education & Training rolled out Skilling Queenslanders for Work training across the Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay
- STEPS Education & Training was chosen to offer Employability Skills Training (EST) to young people in a number of locations in the Northern Territory, Queensland and Tasmania
- STEPS Education & Training added a Certificate IV in Mental Health and won a contract to roll out the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) in Darwin
- STEPS Staffing Solutions and Dove Recruitment expanded their services to Bundaberg
- Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) program gained extra funding and expansion



## WE SUCCEEDED

- Care for Carers support program extended another year
- National Disability Coordinator Officer (NDCO) position extended another year
- Partners in Recovery (PIR) received a funding extension to July 2019
- NT Aged Care training program was extended another year
- National Panel of Assessors contract extended
- STEPS Education & Training won Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) program contracts in multiple locations across Queensland and the Northern Territory
- STEPS were the successful recipients of a grant under the Strong and Resilient Communities initiative, which will support STEPS Autism Treehouse to run a Positive Autism Connections project
- STEPS was successful in retaining existing DES business, and were successful in winning new business in both Cairns and Hobart



## WE TAUGHT

- STEPS Pathways College was officially opened by the Hon. Jane Prentice MP, Assistant Minister for Social and Disability Services



# CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



**SAMANTHA GEESON**  
Strategic Programs Manager

## THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO STEPS IS OUR CUSTOMER'S EXPERIENCE.

This means listening to gain a better understanding of our customer's needs to provide the kind of experience that imparts a positive impact, providing them with confidence, feeling better supported, more informed, and with a clear picture of their future pathway. It also means providing our customers with the kind of experience that responds to the differences in the way our

customers like to learn, and what they value in a service. It means respecting culture, and the previous experiences that have shaped who our customers are today. By listening and understanding these things we can build service delivery models that provide the most benefit to our customers and the community.

## Fun with friends at camp

STEPS Community Services Maroochydore clients and staff enjoyed three fun-filled days at Borumba Deer Park for their biannual camp.

The wet weather held off for the lucky campers who got involved in a range of outdoor activities including kayaking, bushwalking, mini golf and hand-feeding deer.

STEPS Recreational Activity Coordinator Anthony Walsh said everyone always looks forward to spending time together away from their usual routines.

"Camp is a great chance to relax with friends, have fun, try new things and enjoy a piece of the great outdoors we're so lucky to have in this region," he said.

*"MANY PEOPLE IN OUR GROUP DON'T OFTEN GET THE CHANCE TO ENJOY A TRIP AWAY. I KNOW OUR CAMPERS WILL BE TALKING ABOUT THIS TRIP FOR A WHILE TO COME."*

STEPS client Scott McGrory said having some down time was the highlight of his break away.

"My favourite part of camp is being able to spend time relaxing with my friends," he said.

After busy days the group enjoyed socialising, pampering facials and marshmallow toasting around the camp fire.

Anthony said much of the camp's success is due to the efforts of STEPS staff and volunteers.

"This camp was one of our best yet. We were spoiled with good food, a great location and a wonderful bunch of people to share the experience with," he said.



## Student update: settling into college life

After much planning and preparations, STEPS Pathways College has opened and we couldn't be happier with how well students settled into their new routines. The first group of students all met for the first time at the College Open Day in April, where they also toured the beautiful new purpose-built accommodation units that have become their home for the duration of the course.

The students have shown great enthusiasm and participation as they start to develop skills in the various learning areas. A popular aspect for all the young adults has been finding their favourite recipes, going grocery shopping and preparing their food.

The students have loved learning about nutrition and the different ways they can make a meal healthier. The beautiful BBQ on the patio between the accommodation units has been taken for a spin with the residents making the most of it. It's been great to see the students share in the joy of cooking together and enjoying mealtimes with their new friends and flatmates.

The group has started to learn the basics of managing their personal finances and practice sticking to a budget. Excursions off campus have given a wealth of opportunities to practice making payments, using public transport and engaging in the community.

The students enjoy using nearby parks for fitness and socialising and with the weather warming up we're sure the local beaches will soon be a popular option for weekends and spare time.

College students have formed a close group in the short time they have been living and learning together. They have begun to pick up the skills that will see them become good neighbours and residents in their community.

The group has shared many wonderful memories already from practical lessons to birthday celebrations and we can't wait to watch them grow throughout the course as they practice their skills for independence.



# OUR PEOPLE



**JOANNE DONOHUE**  
Human Resources Manager

Investing in the right people, in the right job, is key to providing our customers with the experience that makes STEPS a leading service provider.

We take recruitment very seriously because we know that it's our people that make the biggest impact in the lives of others, and it's our people who will make STEPS a service provider of choice today and into the future.

STEPS are a team of passionate, knowledgeable and experienced individuals, each playing a significant role, dependent upon each other to deliver a service that creates positive outcomes for our customers and the community.

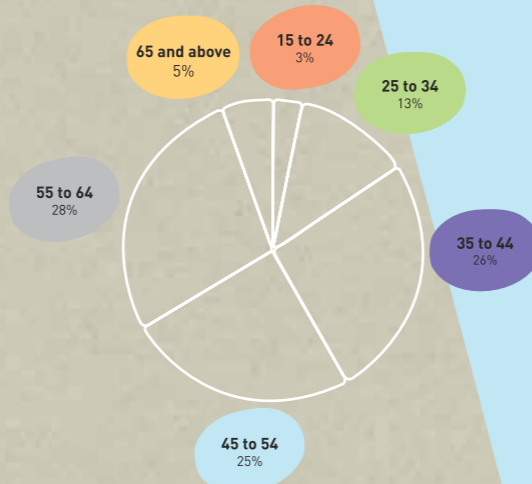
The way we invest in our workforce and the culture we create is based on STEPS' Values; integrity, courage, respect and understanding. In harmony with our strategic goals, these values set the foundations for our human resource practices, ranging from how we recruit, to how we perform, and how we improve.

STEPS continue to promote diversity and equality in the workplace with the extension of our Employee Assistance Program, providing employees access to four specialist helplines including an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Helpline, and a Lesbian,

Gay, Bisexual, Transexual, Intersex, Queer or Questioning People Helpline.

As part of our commitment to employee safety and wellbeing, we launched an online training suite addressing fitness for work, drugs and alcohol in the workplace, and anti-bullying and harassment.

We also implemented a new volunteer recruitment program, welcoming volunteers to the STEPS team in roles ranging from administration and training support, to fundraising and event coordination.



## Deaire uses own journey to help others

Coming to the end of her studies and searching for work, Deaire McMullen, who has Cerebral palsy, first heard about STEPS from a university careers advisor. Nearly seven years have passed since Deaire first visited a STEPS Employment Solutions office, and we sat down with her to learn more about her journey from being a customer to sitting on the consultant's side of the table.

### How did you come to work at STEPS Employment Solutions?

"Most of the entry level jobs in my area were on the ground, on your feet kind of work. I knew realistically I wasn't going to be able to do a lot of that, physically. I went to STEPS and signed up as a customer. One day my consultant said 'our manager wants to have a bit of a chat to you'. I went into his office and sat down and he said to me 'your consultant is moving into a different position, and you've got the qualifications and the experience. Do you want to apply for the job?' and nearly six and a half years later I'm still here!"

### Your role is changing from working with both Disability Management Service (DMS) and Employment Support Service (ESS) customers to just DMS. What does that mean for you?

"DMS supports people with more temporary disabilities, illnesses or injuries. It's tricky because even though on paper, DMS should be easier than ESS, you get more people with attitudes because they're here because they have to be."

### How does your own experience affect the way you support these customers?

"One thing I've always appreciated is that I can use my knowledge, because I've been on the other side of the table and I know how the system works. I can often just say to people, 'I'm here, I work 30 hours a week, I don't get any benefits from Centrelink anymore, and if I'm here and I'm doing it, you can too'. That's where I think I have a bit of a lead in how I do my job. I think learned experience is a very underappreciated skill."

### What's one of the challenges you find in the disability employment industry?

"There can be a mindset that people with a disability can only do cleaning or hospitality or retail or something like that. It's important to see that people with disabilities can do well in career jobs if a few little modifications are made."

### What is one thing you enjoy about being a part of the STEPS team in Maroochydore?

"One thing I love about the team here is that it's never about what I can't do. I have the same job as everybody else and if there's something physically that maybe I can't do, I just let them know and we figure it out."

### How has working with STEPS affected other areas of your life?

"I say to people if you met me six years ago you wouldn't recognise me. I was a completely different person. I was a very quiet, introverted person. I suffered with anxiety and depression myself and I was very insecure. I owe this job everything. I've got my own house now, I've paid off my car and I'm about to start home renovations. And that's all from this job, from STEPS."



## Teaching refugees a journey of discovery

Working with refugees and migrants has been the most enriching experience of teacher Jasmine Rahman's career.

Having recently commenced her role as a teacher of the Adult Migrant English Program with STEPS Education and Training, Jasmine said that each day was a new day of discovery.

"Teaching is like a journey of learning to me. While meeting new people, I do not only teach them but also I learn a lot from them. That is how I rediscover myself every day," she said.

Originally from Bangladesh, Jasmine emigrated to Australia in 2012 to study at university, achieving her bachelor degree and Masters in Research.

With aspirations to complete her PhD and teach at university, Jasmine took on the role with the not-for-profit organisation to gain valuable experience teaching adults from a diverse range of backgrounds.

Having come from a non-English speaking background herself, Jasmine believes her experience has given her a unique perspective and insight into some of the challenges her current students face in moving to a new country.

"I feel happy when I can teach them about living in Australia and make them a bit more comfortable and confident in dealing with real life situations and settling down in Australia," she said.

"Learning about these refugees' and migrants' lives, their good and bad experiences in life, their perspectives about life is the amazing part of my job."



## STEPS volunteer Linda is learning and loving it

Avid gardener and reader Linda Ritchie helps make a difference by volunteering her time in a supportive role at STEPS Pathways College.

Linda said she loves being a part of a program that provides students with the opportunity to gain independence.

Holding a passion for learning, Linda said she has gained new knowledge in her volunteer role and is eager to learn more.

"I enjoy learning about the strengths of each student and how I can support them to be more aware of those strengths and believe in themselves and their abilities."

"Being here is the passion in my life at the moment," she said.

At 69 years old, Linda said age is not a barrier to volunteering at the College and encourages more people to apply for roles.

Linda has volunteered for most of her adult life in a range of different areas, and said she knew straight away that the volunteer support role was what she wanted to do.

**"AS SOON AS I HEARD ABOUT STEPS PATHWAYS COLLEGE AND HOW THE PROGRAM BUILDS INDEPENDENCE FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY, I KNEW THAT'S THE ONE."**

"It's a great place to volunteer because of the wonderful students and the team here."

Originally planning to volunteer half a day each week, Linda instead spends four to five days with students at STEPS Pathways College, providing support when it's needed.

Linda said working with the college students has been a very fulfilling experience.

"It has been the best, and I love it."





# OUR COMMUNITY



**KERRY STAINES**  
Executive Manager -  
Community Services

## STEPS MAKES A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITIES.

Whether we're working with an individual, a group of people, local leaders or an organisation, each positive relationship, collaboration and outcome has a ripple effect through the community.

People with a disability, their family and carers are a community. As are our refugee and migrant students, our local townships, and the remote Indigenous communities we support. STEPS work with and serve many communities, united by locality, common interest, circumstance and culture.

Our aim is to empower communities to be self sustaining and thrive to seek, create and

embrace opportunities. We do this through building the skills of individuals, improving access to information, advocating for improved rights and campaigning for change. We foster collaborations that result in a greater good, and build partnerships that provide holistic benefits to our customers and better support the most vulnerable.

By making a positive difference in our communities, we are imparting tools for change for generations to come, and a legacy of good that will continue to ripple into the future.

## Nailing it: women build skills and furniture in Hermannsburg

Measuring, sawing and sanding, women in Hermannsburg are picking up skills and power tools, and crafting furniture for their families.

STEPS Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) students have been experiencing some hands-on learning in the Tjuwanpa women's carpentry group where they have been building their own furniture.

After dedicating time to learning and developing carpentry skills, students have so far constructed beds, tables, chairs, cabinets, mirrors, and even a cubbyhouse.

With no furniture stores in the small, remote community, Hermannsburg locals have few options: either travel 130 kilometres to Alice Springs, pay the costly transport delivery fees, or go without basic furnishings.

Students of the women's carpentry group have found another option: they can build it themselves.

After deciding what type of furniture they would like to build, students design, plan and construct it, before taking it home.

The program helps students build practical skills and knowledge.

STEPS SEE trainer Maryanne Cameron helps assist students in the carpentry group and said the program provides contextualised language, literacy and numeracy learning for students.

"We write safety rules, instructions on how to use power tools, and a lot of numeracy, like measuring and other maths skills."

"Because there is a direct, practical application, it's so much easier to learn," she said.

## Todd gets the job done with four wheels

Under the tropical sky of Townsville, Todd Cordie has been working with livestock for more than 15 years.

Up until last year Todd was managing a cattle farm, but after experiencing an acquired brain injury he could no longer work in the role.

After taking time to recuperate, the father of three was keen to get back to work but found it difficult to find the right support from employment services.

"It was hard because of the fact that none of the employment agencies would help me because I wasn't receiving any government assistance," he said.

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**"I WENT THROUGH ABOUT FOUR OR FIVE AGENCIES BEFORE I FOUND STEPS."**

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STEPS Employment Solutions supported Todd in finding work and assisted him in securing funding for a quad bike through Job Access, an Australian Government initiative.

Since his injury Todd has experienced some issues with keeping his balance and now the four-wheeled bike provides him with a more secure way to perform his work duties.

Todd has been working at a cattle station as a farmhand and said the quad bike has made a big difference.

"I use it a lot for mustering and other jobs like checking water," he said.

"After the accident my balance has been a bit off. A four-wheeler was a good option because I don't have to worry about falling off."



## Cairns refugees give back to community

An initiative in Cairns is giving refugees and migrants the opportunity to build a new life, one pallet at a time.

STEPS Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) program students, a group largely made of refugees and migrants, regularly volunteer at The Power of Pallets, a local organisation that turns old timber pallets into furniture for charity.

SEE trainer Moira Kenny said the students benefit greatly from volunteering at the workshop as they boost their job-ready skills including workplace health and safety, communication and team work.

"The Power of Pallets is one of those organisations that ticks so many 'feel good' boxes.

"It's all about upcycling timber pallets that would otherwise go into landfill and the students enjoy giving back to the community through their efforts," she said.

The students help to pull the pallets apart, oil the timber, create stage props for the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair and make furniture which is donated to those in need including victims of domestic violence.

The community-based organisation also holds regular fundraisers auctioning off exceptional furniture and art pieces with money donated to local causes.



# OUR BUSINESS



**STUART COWARD**  
Executive Officer

## STEPS IS A FOR PURPOSE BUSINESS.

We are a not for profit service provider that bases its strategic direction and decision making using the collective business acumen of our Managing Director, our Board of Directors, and the executive team. Building our organisation on strong business foundations provides us with sustainability in an ever-changing sector, and the stability to do more to create opportunities in our community.

The key to our success has been in partnering with other businesses and organisations to

deliver the biggest impact locally. In STEPS Charity local partnerships have helped us raise significant funds to help young people with a disability achieve life long independence. Partnerships have helped us reach out to and support the most vulnerable people in our community as part of the STEPS Social & Community brand. And in STEPS Employment Solutions and STEPS Education & Training, industry partnerships and local employer collaborations have helped us create greater opportunities for employment.

## STEPS Group Australia teams up with Dove Recruitment

Two Sunshine Coast businesses have teamed up to make a difference by providing employment opportunities within the commercial, executive and community sectors.

STEPS Group Australia has merged with Dove Recruitment, coinciding with the launch of STEPS Staffing Solutions which will focus on providing recruitment and on-hire services to the community, aged and home care sectors.

STEPS Staffing Solutions also has offices in Maroochydore and Bundaberg to provide professional services to customers through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and state and federal government funding initiatives.

Specialising in commercial and executive placements, the professional team at Dove Recruitment have more than 60 years' combined industry experience.

STEPS Group Australia's managing director Carmel Crouch said it was clear that the two organisations shared values and priorities and so a merge was an ideal outcome for them both.

"The merging of STEPS Staffing Solutions with Dove Recruitment enables us to focus on providing the right staff for the right job every time," she said.

Debbie Rawlings, former owner of Dove, has embraced the opportunity to work closely with Carmel and her team.

"We have worked in this region for many years and I am really excited about the positive impact that both organisations working together will have on communities locally and Australia wide," she said.



## Community leaders merge to provide Australian first services

Like STEPS, The Autism Treehouse was also founded by a passionate parent wanting to make a difference in the lives of people with a disability and their families.

Claire Gilmour founded The Autism Treehouse to build community and connect Sunshine Coast families, children and young people living with autism.

The organisation also provides support and access to resources, life skills programs and social events.

The two organisations have so much in common they have moved to merge so that together they can ensure every Sunshine Coast family has the support, care and services they need.

STEPS Group Australia's managing director Carmel Crouch said a merger is an ideal outcome for them both, given the two not for profit organisations shared so many values and goals.

*"I HAVE LONG SUPPORTED CLAIRE AND THE AUTISM TREEHOUSE AS A VOLUNTARY BOARD MEMBER, SO IT SEEMED A POSITIVE STEP TO WELCOME THEM INTO STEPS AND PROVIDE THEIR WORK WITH GREATER PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT," CARMEL SAID.*

Founding director of The Autism Treehouse, Claire Gilmour, said it was an exciting change and would mean a lot to the local families to have even more therapists, professional staff and resources to grow.

"It's a wonderful opportunity for us and quite a relief as well to now be surrounded by likeminded, highly trained and caring people who can appreciate how much our families need and welcome their support," Claire said.





# OUR IMPACT



**BRUCE ELDRIDGE**  
Chief Financial Officer

## OUR SUCCESS IS MEASURED BY THE POSITIVE IMPACT WE HAVE ON OUR COMMUNITIES.

This is our only reason for being. It is our WHY underpinning all that we do, and all that we have done over the last 30 years.

In order to make a difference, STEPS are committed to leading conversations that foster a change in attitudes and behaviours at all levels of society. We believe that with our experience and expertise also comes a great responsibility to speak on behalf of the most vulnerable people in our community.

We do this by advocating and campaigning to provide improved access to opportunities for our customers and our communities. We also actively create opportunities through the funds raised for STEPS Charity. Through STEPS Charity we are able to deliver important services to the community where those needs are not met through government funded programs. An example of this is in STEPS Pathways College, an Australian first education complex giving young people with a disability the opportunity to gain life long independent living skills.

Skills for independence is a common thread in the work we do. Access to information and knowledge is a powerful precursor for self realisation and ultimately independence. Whether we're teaching refugees and migrants English language skills for settlement in Australia, improving language, literacy and numeracy skills in Indigenous communities, helping people with a disability find work, or providing opportunities for independent living, the acquisition of skills and knowledge is fundamentally what we hope to impart on our customers, so that they have the freedom and confidence to seize opportunities for improved quality of life.

In 2017 STEPS launched a project to build a Social Return on Investment Measurement Tool which will allow us to capture and report on the real difference we are making in the communities we serve. We look forward to using this data to understand our true impact on communities, and applying the information to provide improved opportunities for the people in our community who need it the most.

## STEPS Grand Winter Ball raises \$170,000 for young people with disabilities

The Sunshine Coast business community showed overwhelming support for STEPS Charity with over 450 people attending The Events Centre Caloundra for the STEPS Grand Winter Ball.

Each year STEPS Charity put on an unforgettable event while raising funds to create opportunities for young people living with a disability.

This year's ball was no different, raising a phenomenal \$170,000 for STEPS Pathways College.

With more than 150 local businesses donating prizes for

silent auctions and over 20 local sponsors involved, it's the Charity's most important fundraising event of the year.

STEPS Managing Director Carmel Crouch said the money raised from the event will assist in funding the ongoing needs of STEPS Pathways College.

"We continue to be blown away by the generosity of our local community who help us take that next step to a brighter future for young people with a disability," she said.





## Local chocolate factory finds perfect recipe for staff

Visiting a chocolate factory is a childhood dream for many but for one local woman it's what she has to look forward to every day.

Rhonda Hammond landed her sweet gig at Macaday Farm, local producers of delectable choc coated macadamia bars, after new owners Emily and Bernie Wickham turned to STEPS Employment Solutions for support.

"We found STEPS by accident, but now that we know they exist it's a way for us to find all our new employees," Emily said.

Before Rhonda joined the Macaday Farm team Emily and Bernie juggled managing both production and sales on their own.

"Trying to run that factory with just my husband and I was quite difficult, and Rhonda relieves a lot of the pressure. It's made the process a lot smoother."

Rhonda's new job, which involves preparing the handmade rocky road, has played an important role in helping her manage her disability and overcome personal challenges.

"I didn't want to get out of the house beforehand

and now I feel happy because I have a reason to get up in the morning," she said.

"Emily and Bernie's attitude towards the business is just brilliant. They've got integrity, they want to thrive with this business and take it into the future. That makes me really happy because I want to be a part of a team like that."

Emily encourages all businesses to consider employing people with a disability and said the government incentives available when hiring someone with a disability can greatly help new businesses, giving them the financial confidence to hire a person long term.

"It helps keep our cash flow going in these early stages of our business and allow us to get the help that we need," she said.

"Just because people have a disability doesn't mean that they can't work. We have a daughter who has a disability and we'd hate to think that people wouldn't employ her because of her disability," she said.

"We want people who want to get excited about the business, and that's what Rhonda does."

## STEPS Pathways College officially opened by the Hon. Jane Prentice MP

Australia's first college teaching young people with a disability skills for a lifetime of independence was officially opened by the Hon. Jane Prentice MP, Assistant Minister for Social and Disability Services.

Cr Jenny McKay, Andrew Wallace MP and Jarrod Bleijie MP also attended the STEPS Pathways College official opening ceremony in Caloundra in front of the College's supporters, students and their family.

The College is the brainchild of STEPS Group Australia managing director Carmel Crouch, who saw the need for young adults with a

disability to have the opportunity to move out of home and make informed decisions about their own lives.

"It has been a long journey but to see these students learn new skills and create their own independence has made it all worth it," Carmel said.

Jane Prentice, who had also visited the campus during the build of the College, said she looked forward to returning for the graduation ceremony.



# MEET THE BOARD



## CARMEL CROUCH

Carmel Crouch's appointment as board Chair started more than 27 years ago when STEPS was just a small organisation trying to provide young people with a disability with opportunities for workplace participation and independence. Today Carmel is the Chair of a much larger organisation that helps many individuals all over Australia strive for a brighter future.

As Chair, Carmel facilitates STEPS Group Australia's strategic planning and major decision making processes. Her in-depth knowledge of not for profit corporate governance, coupled with her service delivery expertise and determination for social equality, has been instrumental in the ongoing success of the organisation.



## CHRISTINE JONES

Christine is a solicitor in private legal practice. She was admitted as a legal practitioner initially in 1986, and now practices primarily as a dispute resolution practitioner.

Christine has been a director and secretary of STEPS Group Australia Ltd since 2006, and is a director and the secretary of STEPS Charity Ltd. Christine is also a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



## HELEN FERGUSON

Helen Ferguson has been in private enterprise for more than 35 years and until recently retiring, was the Principal Adviser in her own financial planning business.

Helen joined the board of directors of STEPS Group Australia Ltd in 2003 and is a director of STEPS Charity Ltd. Helen is also a member of the Rotary Club of Bundaberg Daybreak, is a Bundaberg District Executive of Scouts Australia, and is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



## MICHAEL LUTJE

Michael is a chartered accountant and a partner in his firm with over 26 years' experience.

Michael has been a director and the treasurer of STEPS Group Australia Ltd since 2009, and is a director and the treasurer of STEPS Charity Ltd. He is also a member of the National Tax & Accountants' Association, the Taxation Institute of Australia and the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



## SHELTON WABERSINKE

Shelton graduated from The University of Sydney with a Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery in 1985 and has been a Family General Practitioner on the Sunshine Coast since 1990.

Shelton is one of the founding Principals of Lake Kawana General Practice and practices in all areas of medicine with a special interest in Mental Health. She is a Local Area Group (LAG) Coordinator for the Primary Health Network (PHN) and a member of their GP Reference Group. For many years she has held the position of Honorary Medical Officer at Marcoola Surf Life Saving Club.

Shelton is a director of STEPS Group Australia Ltd and STEPS Charity Ltd.

# EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM



## CARMEL CROUCH

Managing Director

Carmel Crouch has held numerous senior executive roles in a career that spans the commercial and not for profit sector. Carmel is a distinguished community leader and a passionate advocate for people with a disability. Building capacity, and empowering individuals and communities towards independence has become Carmel's trademark approach to service design. Combined with her in-depth knowledge of contract administration, Carmel has been successful in achieving important social and political change.

Carmel's innovative approach to service delivery, skilled strategic leadership, and business acumen have been instrumental in the expansion and diversification of STEPS' work, and in supporting people to achieve greater independence in life.

Carmel is also the Chief Executive Officer of STEPS' Registered Training Organisation.



## STUART COWARD

Executive Officer

Stuart Coward is a highly experienced business professional having established a string of successful business ventures in the training, hospitality and employment industries prior to joining STEPS. Stuart's strategic negotiating skills and passion for community development has seen him forge effective partnerships nationally and internationally including the securement of several global sister city agreements.

As Executive Officer of STEPS Group Australia, Stuart seeks out innovative partnerships with industry and government that provide opportunities for growth and diversification in line with STEPS' strategic objectives.

Stuart has held a number of community leadership roles and today is a representative of the Qld Health and Community Services Industry Skills Council.



## SAMANTHA GEESON

Strategic Programs Manager

Samantha Geeson has worked in commercial recruitment and employment services industries for 25 years. She holds a Bachelor of Applied Science (Applied Psychology) and a Graduate Diploma in Human Resource Management with a Certificate IV in Project Management. Samantha has worked in the private and not-for-profit sectors and has held senior management and executive level roles in STEPS.

Her experience includes program design and delivery, contract management, quality management systems and compliance. She is currently the Strategic Programs Manager with STEPS Group Australia where her role includes responsibility for facilitating strategic planning processes, delivery of specialist mental health services within the Disability Employment Services (DES) Contract and quality management systems to satisfy the requirements of the National Standards for Disability Services (NSDS), the Human Service Quality Framework (HSQF) and the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015.



## BRUCE ELDRIDGE

Chief Financial Officer

Bruce Eldridge is a Certified Practising Accountant with more than 14 years' experience working in commercial and industry enterprise before entering the not for profit sector. As Chief Financial Officer, Bruce manages a highly effective finance team and is an integral member of the Executive Leadership Team.

Bruce's applied knowledge of project and asset management, and skill in managing supply chain logistics have been fundamental in STEPS' success in contract delivery and growth. An intricate understanding of corporate governance has led to the smooth transition of large acquisitions and the change of STEPS' legal entity from an incorporated association to a company limited by guarantee. Bruce is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



## KERRY STAINES

Executive Manager - Community Services

Kerry has extensive experience mentoring and supporting people with a disability or mental illness, victims of domestic violence and young people with behavioural challenges. As the Executive Manager of Community Services, Kerry oversees the variety of programs STEPS run to improve the quality of life for people with a disability, their families and the greater community.

Kerry's approaches and understanding of supporting people towards a better life is invaluable to STEPS as the National Disability Insurance Scheme is rolled out in the communities we work. Her drive for finding innovative and sustainable opportunities echoes throughout the teams she works with and leads.

Kerry is a descendant of the Mandandanji Indigenous people and is passionate about helping Indigenous people, their communities and their culture to thrive.



## JOEL STEVENS

Executive Manager - Education & Training

With over 20 years of industry experience in the Australian Vocational Education and Training sector, Joel has a passion for creating quality teaching and learning environments that support individuals in achieving their goals.

Joel's practical experience and specialised technical knowledge has enabled him to lead strategic planning, achieve organisational objectives and strengthen staff capability. By working effectively with senior leadership teams, Joel has successfully delivered a number of government contracts and diverse operational objectives.

As the Executive Manager of STEPS Education & Training and a member of the Executive Leadership Team, Joel is responsible for leading the development and implementation of programs across four Australian states.

Joel's qualifications include an Associate Diploma of Vocational Instruction, a Bachelor of Adult and Vocational Education from Griffith University, a Diploma of Business, a Diploma of Government and a Certificate IV in Statutory Enforcement.



## PHOEBE PAYNE

Executive Manager - Employment Solutions

Phoebe is passionate about building customer-focussed teams and making a difference in the community by providing individuals with support, tailored services, skills, and opportunities to achieve their goals.

Holding many management and leadership roles in both the retail and employment industries, Phoebe has extensive knowledge and experience in strategic planning and delivering organisational objectives. Phoebe has worked in both state and national learning and development roles and has worked closely with senior leadership teams to implement and deliver government department contracts and operational objectives, while building and enhancing staff capability.

As Executive Manager of Employment Solutions and a member of the Executive Leadership Team, Phoebe is responsible for developing, designing, and leading the delivery of projects and programs within STEPS Employment Solutions, including the National Panel of Assessors (NPA), Disability Employment Services (DES), and Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) programs.

Phoebe holds an Executive Diploma in Retail Management from Monash University, and a Certificate IV in both Project Management and Frontline Management.

# SUPPORT STEPS

## You can make a difference!

### PARTNER WITH US

STEPS partner with local businesses and community organisations to provide greater opportunities for our customers and the community.

STEPS currently partner with industry and employers to develop skills and pathways for local employment. We work with businesses on charitable projects that meet a need in the community, and we promote collaboration with other organisations where a holistic approach provides our customers with the best opportunity to succeed.

We invite you to speak with STEPS about how we can join forces to create mutually beneficial opportunities, and together make a difference in our community.

### WORK FOR STEPS

Want to make a difference every day? Whether it's in the field or an office, everyone at STEPS plays an important role creating positive change in our communities.

Visit [www.stepsgroup.com.au/careers](http://www.stepsgroup.com.au/careers) to view current opportunities.

### VOLUNTEER

Join the STEPS team as a valued volunteer! Volunteering is a great way to give back to the community, as well as building your own skills for future employment. We're looking for volunteers to help out in all areas of our organisation - all over Australia. So if you have a passion, come and put it into practice at STEPS! Call us on 07 5458 3000 for information about volunteering at STEPS.

### GIVE

You can support the work we do by making a donation to STEPS Charity. Your donation to STEPS Charity goes towards creating a brighter future for young people with a disability in our community. You can make a one off donation, set up regular giving, or join a Workplace Giving Program.

Give today at [www.stepscharity.com.au](http://www.stepscharity.com.au)



WE INCLUSIVELY AND  
HOLISTICALLY INSTIL  
CONFIDENCE AND  
PREPARE PEOPLE TO  
TAKE ON THE WORLD.

CARMEL CROUCH





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